

Analyzing the Impact of RPRH Law Implementation on Poverty Reduction in the Philippines

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A key research question with relevance to policy is how the full implementation of the RPRH law, with attention to its three key elements, namely: comprehensive sexuality education, family planning, and maternal and child health, contributes to economic growth and poverty reduction. This study describes the various pathways in which these key elements would work their way to affecting fertility, human capital formation, and economic growth and poverty reduction. Among the pathways considered, recent studies have provided into the economic and social impact of preventing early childbearing, reducing maternal mortality, and preventing child stunting. However, a gap exists in measuring the effect of achieving couples desired fertility on economic growth and poverty reduction through its impact on the age structure, investments in human capital, and productivity. The study addresses this gap by estimating the economic gains from a full implementation of the RPRH law, with attention on the family planning component as opposed to delayed implementation or no implementation scenarios ("business as usual"). The results show that helping couples achieve the desired number of children can potentially have substantial economic benefits in terms of more rapid economic growth arising from the first and second demographic dividends, which in turn accelerate poverty reduction both in terms of incidence and number of population.

Keywords: RPRH law, total fertility rate, demographic dividends, poverty reduction

1. Introduction

Poverty has remained high over the last 25 years. As of 2015, more than one in every five Filipinos are poor, i.e., fall below the income threshold determined by the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA). During this period, the maternal